



Greenhorn Firewise Community

March 2026 Newsletter

Hi Neighbors!

Yikes! When I wrote the February newsletter, just a few weeks ago, it was snowing. And now it's mid-80s! Hopefully it's temporary and we'll have more spring (they say don't plant your tomatoes outside until after Mothers' Day), but it certainly has spurred me to ramp up my defensible space work. And that's our focus this month.

Please Consider Supporting the [Wildfire Ready Coalition of Nevada County](#). This volunteer-driven organization just celebrated its first anniversary. They have provided invaluable support to Firewise Communities throughout Nevada County—including ours—and [accomplished so much in one year](#). They [need financial support](#) to keep going. Donation tiers start at just \$2/month or \$25/year. Supporting them supports us.

Free Green Waste Disposal

Nevada County has several options this year for free green waste disposal.

- **Dropoff events** are on five consecutive Mondays from April 27 through May 25 (Memorial Day) from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the McCourtney Rd. Transfer Station. [Please see the County's website for additional information](#).
- **Neighborhood dumpster delivery.** If you can organize enough neighbors to fill a 40-yard dumpster (and have an appropriate location), the County has a limited number that can be delivered on a Friday afternoon and picked up the following Monday morning.
- **Chipping.** The County will also chip organic materials within certain guidelines (chips will be broadcast on your property).

For more detailed information about dumpsters and chipping, please contact the person you received this email from, or greenhornfirewiseboard@gmail.com.

Why defensible space?

Last month we talked about the importance of defensible space. Reducing fuel around your property, particularly along roads and driveways and within the three "zones" closest to your home and other structures is a never-ending job when you live in our beautiful forest. But the benefits are many:

- Reduces the probability of your home or outbuildings burning if a fire goes through your area.
- Provides safer areas for firefighters to defend your and others' homes.
- Improves safety for you and neighbors in the event of an evacuation.
- Improves the likelihood that firefighters are able to get to your property and defend it.
- Can reduce the overall severity of a wildfire **if more residents do this work**.
- Improves forest health (fewer trees means healthier trees and better environment for other native plants).
- Can potentially reduce your insurance bill or help you keep your insurance.

What to do with all that fuel?

There are three primary ways to deal with all that fuel you are cutting down—burning, chipping, and offsite disposal. Of course you can combine these methods in whatever way works best for you. And just a reminder—our Firewise Community needs to document hours and dollars spent by residents for home hardening, defensible space, and other related work. Help us keep our Firewise recognition by completing the [Firewise activity report](#). You can complete this form multiple times throughout the year to document your work and expenses.

Disposal. There are several options for sending your green waste away:

- Utilize free green waste drop-off days in April and May as noted above.
- [Order a green waste can](#) to utilize Waste Management’s residential curbside pickup (if practical at your location).
- Drop off at [McCourtney Rd. Transfer Station](#) (Wed-Sun 8 am-3:30 pm). Current cost is \$12.34/cubic yard.
- Rent a large dumpster to be dropped off, filled, and picked up. This option works especially well if you can share the cost and work with some neighbors. Or try for one of the free bins.

Chipping. Wood chips can be used as mulch for weed abatement and water retention in planting areas. Make sure it is distributed at least 30 feet from your residence and other structures. You can rent a chipper or utilize the County’s chipping program (see above for more information). If you do not need chips for mulching, consider having them hauled away (not an option with County chipping). Spreading chips creates surface fuel and when wind is blowing during a fire the chips can travel readily. Also keep in mind that chips can attract bark beetles. If you plan to use the chips for mulch, best to pile and compost them with manure and water.

Burning. Pile burning is a common way to dispose of green waste and wood not suitable for your heating stove. Be sure to follow all regulations and guidelines for pile size, materials allowed to burn, and safety precautions. And make sure it’s a burn day (even if it is, use common sense regarding wind).

Prescribed “broadcast” burning is another tool for creating and maintaining defensible space, with added benefits to forest/ecosystem health (our forests evolved with low intensity fire over many thousands of years). Regulations are very similar to pile burning, and as with pile burning it’s important to have proper training and resources on hand. The [Nevada County Resource Conservation District](#) has dedicated staff and an excellent training and advisory program for those who are interested.

At certain times of year, a CALFIRE burn permit will be required for either type of burning. [Nevada County’s Burn Permits page](#) provides all the information you need about safety, permits, and [burn day status](#) (with links to CALFIRE and our Air Quality Management District). Burn day status is also typically reported each morning on [YubaNet](#), or call (530) 274-7928.

Fire Smart Landscaping

Defensible space doesn’t have to mean a landscape devoid of trees and plants. You can make your landscape beautiful and more “fire smart” by considering placement and grouping of plants, use of more fire-resistant plants, and proper maintenance of your plantings. Here are some helpful resources.

- [Fire Smart Landscaping](#) (Source: CALFIRE)
- [Firescaping Your Home: A Manual for Readiness in Wildfire County](#) (Adrienne Edwards and Rachel Schleiger, Timber Press, 2023)